PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF EVENTS IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

No. 10. SECOND SERIES.

PROVIDENCE:
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1881.

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THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN:

A PERSONAL VIEW.

AUGUST 9, 1862.

BY

REV FREDERIC DENISON, A. M.,

[FORMERLY CHAPLAIN OF FIRST RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY.]

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THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN:

A PERSONAL VIEW

[Read before the Society, November 10, 1880.]

This engagement, which occurred August 9th, 1862, in Culpepper County, Virginia, near the north-western base of the remarkable dome-like eminence from which it was named, was the first regularly planned and stubbornly fought battle in which the First Rhode Island cavalry, as an entire regiment, was brought under the enemy's fire. Portions of the command, in scouts, reconnoisances and advance movements, had previously become intimate with secession shells and bullets, as near Warrenton Junction, April sixteenth; Rappahannock crossing, April eighteenth; Front Royal, May thirtieth; Columbia

bridge, June second; Miller's bridge, June fourth; Mountain road, June ninth; and in a short dispute near Raccoon ford, just before the battle of which I am to speak. The charge of our second battalion at Front Royal, May thirtieth, had deservedly brought large notice and credit to our command. From the nature of cavalry service and the peculiar plans and operations of the war in its first stages, it was seldom that mounted troops could be led into action as a whole. We now, however, were all together brought into a systematically formed and hotly contested battle.

This, too, was the first of that memorable series of severe engagements between the Army of Virginia, under General Pope (John), and the rebel army of Northern Virginia, under General Lee (Robert E.). This particular and initial battle, however, was fought between the corps of General Banks (Nathaniel P.), and the advancing confederate forces under Generals "Stonewall" Jackson (Thomas J.) Ewell (Richard S.), and Hill (Ambrose P.). Our army was advancing to make a demonstration upon Richmond, by the way of Culpepper and Orange

Court Houses, to relieve the heavy pressure then on the heroic Army of the Potomac, under General McClellan (George B.), by drawing off from his front a portion of General Lee's army This last object we certainly accomplished, as we well knew when the challenged enemy poured down upon us from the banks of the Rapidan.

General Pope's advance began on the first of August from his front, then extending from the Rappahannock, at Fredericksburg, to the gaps of the Blue Ridge mountains. His entire army, organized in three corps, numbered about 38,000 men, of whom 5,000 were cavalry The mounted troops, as usual, were in the van and on the flanks. We were then in General Rickett's (James B.) division of General McDowell's (Irwin) corps, reporting directly to General McDowell, and were on the extreme left wing of the advancing front.

On the morning of August sixth we forded the Rappahannock below the newly erected bridge of the Orange and Alexandria railroad, having guarded the river and held back rebel raiders while the bridge was rebuilding. Advancing towards Cul-

pepper Court House, we threw out our advance guard and skirmish line and moved cautiously, ready to meet any attack. Reaching the suburbs of Culpepper, we made a short halt to allow a portion of our army to come up. On the arrival of General McDowell we were ordered to move nearly ten miles to the left, near Raccoon ford, on the north bank of the Rapidan. Reaching our destination, we chose our headquarters in bivouac on the famous flat lands, in an oak forest, on the Vaughn plantation, in full view of Poney mountain, about four miles from the ford. At once we threw out most of the command on picket along the river, both above and below the ford, holding a front of five or six miles,—not an easy matter, as the rebel scouts continued to dash across the stream for attack and plunder. The night before we reached the ford a party of about one hundred of the enemy's cavalry had crossed and carried off a number of negroes.

Our pickets on the right joined those of General Bayard (George D.), stretching along near Rapidan station, at the south of Cedar Mountain. His pickets extended up the river and joined those of General

Buford (John) on his right. Thus the cavalry held the army van. We were now brigaded under General Bayard, whose command of horse consisted of the First Maine, First Rhode Island, First New Jersey, and First Pennsylvania cavalry regiments. Already the rebels began to appear in force upon the highlands on the south of the Rapidan, and we were aware that some real service was at hand.

On the seventh of August the enemy exchanged a little lead with us, and at the same time began to shell General Bayard's line up the river. Near midnight, on the night of the seventh, we were reenforced by the First Maine cavalry on our left. On the same day (seventh) the rebels in force crossed Barnett's ford, still further up the river, and advanced in two columns, one towards Madison Court House, and the other towards Culpepper Court House, the former being, as proved, only a feint. The force advancing towards Culpepper meant serious business, and so attacked General Bayard's line. General Pope's chief forces of infantry and artillery now lay between Culpepper Court House and Sperryville. The enemy meant to strike our left, and made the

feint upon our right to prevent it from coming to the support of the left. "Stonewall" Jackson understood tactics and strategy, as well as the face of the country.

Early in the afternoon of the eighth an aid reached us in hot haste, reporting the attack on General Bayard, which we only too well knew by the firing, and ordering us to move instantly to his support. Having anticipated the order, we were at once in our saddles, in line, and off for the point of attack, leaving our meagre train of supplies to follow us as best it might. Ready for action, we advanced through plantations and forests by a route of six or eight miles, and found General Bayard making a stand to the best of his ability near the northwestern base of Cedar Mountain. To this point he had been driven after gallant resistance by skirmishing during the previous twenty-four hours, losing many horses and some men, but capturing more than he lost. It was now near nightfall. The general at once ordered our regiment upon the front to face the foe, as his other regiments needed a little breathing spell. We put our second battalion on the front as picket and

skirmish line about dark. The rebels seemed to have ceased their advance for the day.

A word here of the situation of General Pope's forces at this time. General McDowell, with his corps of 18,000 men, and General Crawford's (Samuel W.) brigade of General Banks' corps, were at Culpepper Court House, where General Pope had just arrived. General Siegel (Franz), with his corps of 11,000, was at Sperryville, but hurrying forward to Culpepper. General Banks, with his corps (save General Crawford's brigade), was at Hazel run, but on quick march for Cedar Mountain, the point of attack. His entire corps numbered 8,000 men. General Buford, commanding the cavalry on the extreme right, was hotly pressed, and was fighting and gradually falling back from Madison Court House. We were now, with General Bayard, under General Banks, in the Second Army Corps, and unsupported on the front at the point menaced, which proved to be the battle-field.

To understand the battle at all, one must needs have some idea of the field on which the conflict occurred. It was an open valley, in main, of planta-

tion grounds and fields, about two miles in length and one and a half in width, running southeast and northwest, lying to the north and northwest of Cedar Mountain. The valley, particularly to the west, northwest and north, was surrounded by forests. Across its north end ran the Orange wagon road in a southwesterly direction to Robertson's river. Across its south end ran a winding road in a southerly direction, passing east of Cedar Mountain and branching to Mitchell's station, on the Orange and Alexandria railroad. Running through the valley southeasterly was the forked stream called Cedar run, the larger branch on the north, and the smaller on the south side, the two uniting on the east of the valley at Hudson's mill, and then winding away to the Rapidan. The valley contained parts of three plantations: the Crittenden estate at the north, the Slaughter estate at the south, and the Major estate at the west. The lands at this time were well fenced with rails, enclosing meadows, corn-fields, and grain lands recently reaped. Near the centre of the valley was a large rolling knoll, or undulating plateau, on which stood the Crittenden

mansion, and to the north of which stood the house of Mr. Newman, the plantation superintendent. South of this knoll, about half a mile, rose Cedar Mountain, a majestic and beautiful height, appearing like a sugar-loaf in shape. On the east face of this eminence stood the residence of Rev. D. F. Slaughter, from whom the height has sometimes been called "Slaughter Mountain." Southwest of the plateau, and to the west of the mountain, was a ridge of highlands, on the northern slope of which, and in full view from the plateau, stood the plantation house of William Major, and in front of this was a large corn-field.

On these highlands the Confederates first massed their forces. Our regiment was first put on duty upon the knoll, or plateau, the second battalion being a picket and skirmish line. Before dark (eighth) General Crawford's brigade of General Banks' corps reached the valley as reserves and took position in the edge of the forest on the north side. The force consisted of the Forty-sixth Pennsylvania, Twenty-eighth New York, Fifth Connecticut and Tenth Maine regiments of infantry, and ten pieces of artil-

lery. To us their presence was somewhat assuring. Yet we passed a night of great watchfulness. The confederates, under Generals Jackson and Ewell, soon to be joined by General Hill, were forming directly in our front, their right resting on the mountain, and their left extending to the Orange road, in the forest, to the southwest of the valley. They had the high and superior position, hoping to draw us to their ground. We aimed first to arrest their advance, and secondly to draw them into, and, if possible, across the valley upon the sloping lands to the north and east of the valley. Both armies in the end were disappointed, as the struggle came off in the valley, where we were then located. We held a line of front across the plateau on both sides, but chiefly to the west of the Crittenden house and well up to the large meadow, beyond which was the corn-field in front of the Major mansion. The fronts of the two armies ran about southeast and northwest, parallel with the valley.

We remained watching and waiting all night. Just before morning, on the ninth, our commander, Colonel Duffie (Alfred N.) and myself (I then acting,

as before and afterwards, both as chaplain and aid-de-camp), endeavored to secure a cat-nap by throwing ourselves in a cluster of blackberry bushes, in the rear of the regiment. The nap was short and fitful. At daylight, as we were about to remount for the front, Colonel Duffie said to me: "Chaplain, there is work to be done to-day. If any officers are killed, we must rescue their bodies. If you are shot, we will save your body and send it to Rhode Island. If I am killed, save my body and send it to my friends in New Jersey." He then gave specific directions. Taking from my side coat-pocket pencil and paper, and raising my saddle skirt as a desk, asked him to write his order, lest I should forget it. That prized slip of paper is now found pasted in my journal. It reads: "To be sent to Staten Island: Factoryville: Mr. Pelton: New Jersey" We were at once upon the front for full duty.

Our second battalion was now formed regularly as a body of skirmishers to hold the line that we plainly saw was to be the centre of an engagement. We stretched from the spur of forest on our right, west of the Crittenden house, down towards Cedar

Mountain. The First Maine cavalry was on our left, near the base of the mountain. The First New Jersey and First Pennsylvania cavalry were also on our left. We watched Generals Jackson and Ewell bringing their forces into line on the highlands. General Hill, with his corps, arrived later in the day. It was not a very dull study for us to observe the rebel cavalry, artillery and infantry manœuvering for positions, and steadily though slowly advancing their lines. They were so near that we needed no field-glasses to read them. Some of their artillery on the right was pushed nearly to the top of Cedar Mountain. Heavy forces of infantry on their left were advanced into the forests near the Orange road. These movements were not particularly soothing to our nerves, as they plainly augured some blood-letting. Their cavalry, not apparently numerous, manœuvred around and in front of the Major mansion, but did not conclude to directly face our sabres and carbines. Thus slowly the enemy's line consolidated and moved cautiously toward the valley The rebel front finally covered about two miles, and at last more, when General Ewell came up and led

his corps around to the east base of the mountain and met the New Jersey and Maine cavalry on our left.

Early in the day, General Banks, with the effective remainder of his corps, arrived upon the field and immediately drew his forces in line of battle, reaching from the woods on the north of the valley across the valley southeasterly, almost a mile and a quarter, to the northern front of Cedar Mountain, bringing our regiment almost exactly in the centre of his front. The chief part of the forenoon was spent on both sides in taking and changing positions.

The left wing of the confederates was led by General Jackson, the centre by General Hill, and the right by General Ewell—three corps against our one under General Banks. The division on our right wing was commanded by General Williams (A. S.), the division on our left by General Augur (Christopher C.) The brigades forming our line, counting from the right, were General Gordon's (George H.), General Crawford's, General Geary's (John W), General Prince's (Henry), and General Green's (George S.). The batteries of our line were the

Fourth Maine, Sixth Maine, (Captain —— ——) battery and Captain Best's (Clermont S.), regulars. The artillery was posted first between the cavalry and the infantry to support us in case of a sudden attack, and to open the action when the hour should come. Our position was nearly in front of Generals Crawford's and Geary's brigades. Between us and the rebel front was the strip of meadow land through which runs the south fork of Cedar run, quite an insignificant stream at this time of year. Beyond this meadow was the corn-field in front of the Major mansion. On our right was a spur of heavy forest, to which our skirmish line extended. Through the forenoon, despite the steady movement of troops, so far as weapons were concerned an ominous calm reigned, such as precedes a storm; neither army as yet had any powder to waste.

Early in the forenoon, while with our skirmish line, I had the surprise and pleasure of receiving from the base of Cedar Mountain one of General Bayard's officers who had been cut off two days before and had concealed himself and horse in the

forests and finally in the pines of the mountain, but now being pressed by the enemy, and recognizing the federal army by their colors, left his horse and slipped out of the mountain. I escorted him to General Bayard, who received him with delight, having counted him dead or a prisoner.

I had withal a little scene at the Crittenden mansion, where I found only the mistress and her colored female servants. Mrs. Crittenden, quite a high-blooded dame of the Virginia pattern, seeing that a battle was imminent and that her house was in the focus of what promised to be heavy firing, earnestly besought me to obtain permission for her to pass the lines on the front. On strategic grounds, I courteously negatived the proposition. She then entreated to be escorted to the rear of our army. I pleasantly informed her that the general had hardly time, in this stage of affairs, to make a detail for that polite purpose, and advised her, with her attendants, to stand by the castle, assuring her that she should fare as well as we did. Her superintendent, Mr. Newman, soon coming in, joined in the same counsel. Her theory of secession was impracticable. We left

her in great mental perturbation and nervous excitement.

About noon the calm was broken. The confederates began a vigorous probing of our line by their artillery from their centre and right. The shell were particularly addressed to our skirmish line and to our regiment, as we were nearest to them in full view on the plateau and its southern side. These addresses were loud, emphatic and direct, utterly removing all somnolency from our ranks. An artillery bugle in our rear, mingling with the cannon strains, was mistaken by our skirmishers for a recall, and they fell back to the regiment, but were immediately restored to their line. General Bayard, now with our command, rode out to the line and very kindly remarked, "Steady, boys; it is nothing but artillery fire. Shells are only thrown for moral effect."

The artillery posted in our rear promptly and handsomely replied to the enemy's annoying compliments. This demonstration was only a feeler to know what guns we had and where they were. The music, while it lasted, was particularly impressive upon

nerves that had been strained by expectation, and also from being re-enforced by fragments of iron that did effectual grooving in flesh and soil. It seemed as if the music might have been a cross-tune between the bellowings of an earthquake and the screeches of demons, but with a preponderance of the latter. It was the more disagreeable to us mounted troops, in that we had neither liberty nor power to respond. It is a natural impulse of human nature when struck to do a little striking back. Some of the shell struck among us, yet only one man lost his horse.

A sweet-toned shell passing near the head of Colonel Duffie, by whose side I was, and then doing a little extra plowing in the earth, he unconsciously winced a little, but, instantly straightening up in his saddle, exclaimed, "Oh! what a fool!" We never after saw him betrayed by his nerves, though he was an extremely nervous man. He had not before been under fire in this country, and for the moment forgot the military rule to never wince or bother yourself with sound or missile that you can hear. The play is over before the music is heard.

The artillery of both armies played largely over

the heads of our command, giving us a lively and splendid bow of iron and fire, which was not a bow of pleasing promise. The enemy's fire was chiefly from batteries that had been run up into Cedar mountain, and from one near the Major mansion. The fire from the mountain was particularly mischievous. Captain Best's battery, in rear of us, securing the right range, soon put a few shell exactly in the right spot and silenced the worst of the mountain barkers. In mind, I still distinctly see the puff of smoke raised by one of his shells that struck the most effective mountain battery dumb. By the way, Captain Best was one of the best of artillerists. Our guns soon persuaded the enemy to temporarily suspend his noisy discourse and the distribution of his metallic compliments.

Our skirmish line now covered about fifty or sixty rods. It was under command of Major Farrington (Preston M.), and consisted of Troops E, H, F and G, Troop E being on the right, Troop H on the left, while Troops F and G were held as a reserve line.

The body of the regiment stood in order about twenty rods in rear of the skirmish line, waiting

events and orders. By the way, that waiting was more vexatious than fighting. For much of the day Général Bayard held his position with our regiment, as the position was central and from the plateau he had the best view of the whole field. For a time, in the morning, while he was electing his line of battle, General Banks was with us.

Near two o'clock in the afternoon, during the lull of action, I again rode up to the Crittenden mansion to inquire after the health of my patient, the lady of the house, and found her in agony, as secession shells were not as pleasing to her as the theory of secession upon paper and in conversation. Plainly enough, the guns of both armies jarred the mirrors of her mansion. I vainly exhorted her to be calm, with the reflection that no one wished to harm a defenceless woman. She thanked me and gave me a canteen of milk and four biscuits. This kindness moved me to prophecy to her that she would survive the battle. I divided the milk and biscuits with Colonel Duffie, that being the substance of what we had for the day, save water from the run and from Mr. Newman's well. The day was exceptionally hot even for

August, and being in this forest-hemmed valley, heated by the clear-shining sun and hardly fanned by the light summer breeze, not a few men in both armies were prostrated by sun-stroke. Unable to leave our position, our men suffered for the lack of water and regular rations. I recollect having filled my canteen with water, from the run and from wells, fifteen times during the day, taking in all twenty-one quarts, a part of which I gave to field and staff officers and to particular sufferers, while a large part of it I drank myself. It was a day for copious perspiration, as the human machines were run at a high rate of speed, though we seemed to be unconscious of the measure of the excitement at the time.

Indeed, some of our men were remarkably cool. They were such men as might be able to sleep under orthodox preaching, or to write poetry in a thunder storm. During the battle lull Captain Bliss (George N.), was sitting on his horse waiting orders and reading a volume of Scott's novels, "Quentin Durward," that had somehow, somewhere been detailed for special service in his saddle bags. While thus husbanding his time in the pursuit of knowledge, Quar-

termaster Leonard (Charles A.), who always had an eye to physical welfare and was prompt to minister to us when he could, rode up to the captain and encouragingly remarked: "Read all you can; it may be the last chance you will have."

Soon after two o'clock we noticed some advance of the right of our infantry upon the Orange wagon road, and a portion of the force seemed to enter the forest and pass out of our sight. We supposed this force was sent to probe the woods to learn something of General Jackson's advance under cover of the forest. So thoroughly did we entertain this view, that when at last, at the real opening of the battle, the rebel infantry in the woods on the right of our skirmish line, in forming and counting off for action, were mistaken for our own troops.

About three o'clock the lull gave way to the storm; the battle began in earnest. Under cover of the high corn, the fences, stacks, bushes and woods, the rebels had pushed their infantry close down upon Major Farrington's line, within easy rifle range, particularly upon our right, which rested upon the spur of the forest They did not advance their cavalry,

perhaps on account of its insufficiency, but more probably because we had chosen such a line near the south fork of Cedar run as to allow them no good ground and scope for their formation and action. Their first chief advance of infantry was on their left under General Jackson. They were at last so near to Captain Baker's (Allen), (Troop E), on the right of our line, that when they formed for attack our men could hear them counting off among the trees, and when they were in line our men heard the orders, "Ready-aim-fire!"

At the arranged signal the rebels along the most of their front rose simultaneously and poured upon us a tremendous fire. They fired too high and killed but one of our men and one of our horses. The bullets came over upon our regiment on the plateau and chipped up the dry ground in a very lively manner. A moment after this first shower of leaden hail came, one of our officers on my left—I think it was Captain Bliss—quietly remarked: "We now have a fine opportunity for laying in an extra stock of bullets." Acting upon this economical suggestion, I shortly slipped from my stirrups and within a yard of my

horse's feet picked up six of the acorn-shaped rebel presents as evidence of the fruitfulness of the field, and remounted. Some of the bullets went singing and whistling over our heads upon our regular army line. Again the rebel batteries began to bellow, and there was a plenty of music all along the front.

It would be difficult to imagine a severer test to human nerves than that to which we were now subjected. Major Farrington coolly held his brave men to their skirmish line and to their duty under the heavy rain of the enemy's bullets till they had handsomely emptied their barrels, both carbines and pistols. The skirmishers remained unflinchingly till the recall brought them to the body of the regiment. Though a few men were nervous, the battalion fell back with as much order as upon parade. Being near them when the shock of battle broke on them, I desire to make special record of their calm and noble conduct, though they saw death doing its havoc in the line. Particularly conspicuous was the bravery of Major Farrington and his officers. But it almost seems wrong to mention particular names unless a large number is recorded, since all be-

haved gallantly. All doubts as to the metal of the command were now dismissed, and as we were in full view of our whole army, we received their compliments for our coolness. In fact, our nerves had become a little indurated from the metallic ring of the music of the mid-day performance.

Now, again, we were under a magnificent arch of fire, as the rebels opened their guns along their whole front from seven batteries, two of these being on the mountain and able to plunge their shot across the valley. Our army replied from four batteries, all that we then had. These were located almost directly in our rear, and were, as previously mentioned, the Fourth and Sixth Maine, (Captain ———) batteries, and Captain Best's regulars. The regiments of infantry in our battle line at this time were, beginning on our right, Second Massachusetts, Third Wisconsin, Twenty-seventh Indiana, Fortieth Pennsylvania, Twenty-eighth New York, Fifth Connecticut, Twenty-ninth Ohio, Seventh Ohio, Sixty-sixth Ohio, Fifth Ohio, One Hundred and Eleventh Pennsylvania, Third Maryland, One Hundred and Ninth Pennsylvania and One Hundred and Second New

York. At first, early in the day, the batteries were in advance of the infantry and in our rear. Soon after the battle opened, the infantry advanced, leaving the artillery in its rear. General Banks made this movement to meet the rebels, who pushed their infantry forward along their whole line, moving up their artillery at the same time. The valley was now filled with the roar of arms, and clouds of smoke and dust from moving troops. The rebels were earnest and confident, as well they might be, since they numbered more than three to our one in men. General Banks held his little corps in hand heroically, and his corps was certainly a heroic one. As yet the troops of no other corps of General Pope's army came to his support. He was expected simply to prevent the enemy's advance, and not to bring on a full action. But as the enemy had advanced and opened the action, he understood that his orders allowed him no option but to meet stroke with stroke. The strokes on both sides were hot and heavy.

Still on the plateau, and exactly in the focus of this unpleasantness, our regiment had excellent opportunities for studying this action, albeit we had

more music than we really needed and more metal cards passed to us than we then cared to receive on such liberal terms. Like mad meteors the shell howled and screamed and burst above, around and beyond us, fragments often falling in our ranks. Most of these missiles were intended for the regular line of battle back of us. A person may read of a battle and obtain a dim idea of it; only those who share in it know of its awful magnificence, and they cannot formulate that awfulness and grandeur into speech. No word-painting, even when aided by the speaking canvas, can justly represent a battle.

On all sides now were heard the rattle of musketry, the roar of artillery and the blasts of bugles. Through smoke and dust waved standards and guidons. All this was trying to nerves, but we discovered no shrinking, though doubtless some trembling thoughts did wander back to home's calm. Yet we heard none of this sentimentality uttered. Here and there a horse went down under the missiles. Here and there a comrade was cut down. But the command was unmoved. The gaps were at once filled up. Of course we did a great deal of vigorous

thinking. It is hard work to be in a hot fight, receiving blows with no opportunity to strike back. By our side, on the left, stood a very beautiful pine tree, a full foot in diameter. A rebel shell screaming by struck this tree about six feet from the ground and cut it off as a scythe would fell a weed.

The two armies were now surging together, like the jaws of a monster vice, with our command between. As the enemy put forward no cavalry to meet us, and we had no opportunity to make a charge, we were ordered from the plateau into a small depression of the valley immediately to the west of the plateau, near the Newman house, in front of the spur of the forest. We moved with a cool and beautiful manœuvre of battalions that elicited praise from all. We stood in good order in the hollow still in front of our infantry, ready to make or repel a charge. More of our infantry now began to press up upon our right.

If an episode is allowable I should here like to introduce one. In the heat of the battle a company of infantry on our immediate right was ordered to probe the forest on our front to learn of General Jackson's

advance at that point. The captain's colored servant soon followed with a canteen of water. He had scarcely entered the woods when the infantry met General Jackson's van, and the bullets began to peel the trees. The negro turned back in alarm. We saw him emerge from the woods at full speed, hatless, and with expanded eyes and exposed teeth. He was short of breath and of time. In descending the slope into the hollow, as a shell screeched over his naked head, he stumbled, and, screeching at the top of his voice as if the day of doom had come, pitched headforemost down the descent. So great was his speed and such the velocity of his down-hill plunge that he bounded up about two feet, like an India rubber ball, and richochetted some ten feet further down the slope. Thus for a moment the war-tragedy was relieved by this African comedy. We laughed till our sides ached. It was a passage from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Near this time, Captain Bliss's Irish servant, riding his spare horse and knowing the captain's good taste, rode up and handed to him a box of sardines and a couple of apples, with the appropriate observation,

"There, Cap'n, don't you want suth-in to ate." The captain did not refuse.

During the heat of the battle I rode up to General Bank's position, a little in the rear of his right wing. The bullets of the rebel sharpshooters were dropping around him and his staff. They in no degree disconcerted or disturbed him. He was coolly watching the action and giving his orders, and finally moved his position only in deference to the urgent advice of his aids. During the battle one of his staff, Major Pelouze (Louis H.), was wounded. General Banks had a heavy task, indeed, with his 8,000 men to contend with 20,000, who held the superior ground. In fact, he afterwards stated that he met the brunt of the battle and fought the chief part of it with only 5,000 effective men. And we now know that the rebels numbered more than 20,000; the best authorities mention 25,000 as their force.

Repeatedly General Jackson deployed bodies of his infantry from the point of forest in our front to charge upon our line. No sooner were his men formed for the charge than our artillery opened upon

them with canister and drove them back. The enemy attempted this movement three times. Thrice the forces were thus driven back. Such daring and persistency were quite characteristic of General Jackson's command. They were as brave fighters as ever shouldered guns, and General Jackson was their fitting leader. But on this occasion certainly "Greek met Greek." We were still on the front with the fire of both armies playing over us. One of our men, Frank Travers (Troop E), wounded on the advance line, failed to reach the regiment. Having been shot, he fell from his saddle to the ground, still holding to the bridle of his horse. I proposed to ride up and lift him into my saddle, and bring him off. Colonel Duffie checked the brotherly impulse by saying: "Do you not do it. When you advance you will be a target for the sharpshooters. They will pick you off." It was hard to remain quiet and witness the struggles of this wounded comrade. Military orders are made without nerves in them—of the sympathetic kind; and soldiers must be made the same way.

The infantry forces of the two armies were now

steadily surging together for the final hand to hand grapple. Both artillery and musketry were playing at full. The dense war-cloud well-nigh eclipsed the sun. The hours of the day seemed utterly deranged. Bullets whistled. Cannon bellowed. Shell screamed. Explosions reigned in earth and air. Bugles were heard with difficulty. Clouds of dust hung over the roads and the valley. Fences were gone. Fields were trodden to chaff. Horses and battalions were hurrying into new positions. The scene was awfully magnificent. It cannot be described in words. About five o'clock General Crawford's brigade was ordered to charge an enfilading rebel battery on our right front. The charge was heroic and the slaughter was fearful.

While thus on the front of the fray we had three men killed, six wounded and two captured, and lost eleven horses. Major Whipple's (John, Jr.), horse had a cut from a shell on the head. Lieutenant Barker's (Hiram P), was killed under him, but the lieutenant held his place with his troop through all the subsequent movements till he secured a spare beast. His remarkable coolness won for him no

small commendation. But for the protection of the ground, the command would have been decimated, if not annihilated. The hollow was the only sheltered spot between the armies, and that protection was meagre.

The battle had now been raging about three hours. General Geary's brigade, in rear of us, lost very heavily, and he himself was wounded before the action closed. The loss was hardly less in General Prince's brigade, on his left and near the centre. Our four batteries that stood the heavy shock of the conflict fought so desperately and continuously that they finally expended every pound of their ammunition. General Gordon, on our right, carried into action about 1,500 men, and in about thirty minutes of the hottest of the battle lost above 450 men. The battle was at its height about six o'clock and remained in all its terribleness for some time after. No forces had come to General Banks' support, but the battle had been heard seven miles away, at Culpepper, and General Pope was advancing as speedily as possible.

The armies had fairly grappled. General Banks'

losses were terrible. He felt that he could ill afford to spare a man. But knowing that we had been in our saddles thirty hours, and on the front facing the foe twenty-four hours, and hence were exhausted by fatigue, hunger and thirst, while we could be of no further avail in a struggle that must now be fought out mainly by infantry, without our signifying a wish he ordered us to fall back. Calmly and on a walk, we wheeled to the right and brought our torn guidons in order through the storm of fire to the Orange road, and turned toward Culpepper, following the road except where it was blocked by troops and broken wagons. The enemy's shells screeched and broke far over us into the forest in the rear of our army to deter any troops that might be coming to our relief. Soon after leaving the field, and before reaching the Ward plantation, we met General Pope, with General McDowell and his corps hastening to General Banks' support. The general waved us his hand, as he recognized Colonel Duffie and our regiment.

On leaving the field we sent our report to General Banks by Lieutenant Taylor (James P), one of our

aids. He brought from the general this reply: "The Rhode Island regiment behaved well." That was the lieutenant's last service. He had been smitten by a sun-stroke or by the wind of a cannon shot. The brave and beloved man died the next day, as Colonel Duffie said, "a martyr to his zeal."

What often happened to other regiments in hours of battle was here our lot, and is worthy of mention. Our position, strength of appearance and coolness of conduct had a strong moral effect upon the enemy, though we were not called to return blow for blow. Situated most of the time on a commanding knoll, in the centre of the front of the battle, maintaining an imposing line, calmly executing all movements, undaunted by the battle shock even when we were the enemy's mark, we gave to the foe such an impression of force and readiness as delayed the final onset, as some think, for perhaps an hour. This securing of time really saved the day to our army. Had the battle opened an hour sooner General Banks' troops would have been utterly destroyed.

The battle raged with unabating fury till quite nightfall. The two armies smote together like two

great opposing waves. Indeed, more or less fighting continued by moonlight till near the middle of the night. Weary as we were, lying on the ground just in rear of the field, we were not cavaliers enough to sleep well under such heavy music. We had too much anxiety. General Ricketts' division of General McDowell's corps, that passed us, reached the field just in time to save General Banks from being overwhelmed. As it was, the more than 20,000 confederates pushed the war wave quite across the valley to the forest at the north. But they were unable to hold the advantage they had temporarily gained. In the early evening the Second and Fifth Maine batteries of General Ricketts' division did splendid service on our right. The final close of the battle came near midnight.

As General Pope correctly stated, "The slaughter on both sides was severe." Most of the fighting at last was "hand to hand." "The dead bodies of both armies were found mingled together in masses over the whole ground of the conflict."

At daylight, August tenth, the enemy fell back about two miles. It was called a drawn battle.

Both sides claimed a victory. But the field remained with us. On the night of August eleventh the rebels fell farther back towards the Rapidan, leaving many of their dead unburied. On the morning of August twelfth they crossed to the south bank of the Rapidan. These facts invalidate all their published claims to a victory at Cedar Mountain, though they met us with three to one.

Our army lost, in killed, wounded and missing, about 2,000. The rebels lost many more, and among their slain was General Winder (Charles S.). The two armies lost in all nearly 5,000 men, enough to make any field historic. It was justly called, "one of the hardest contested fields in Virginia." Generals Augur, Geary and Colonel Carroll (Samuel S.), were wounded. General Prince, losing his way in the darkness while passing from one flank of our army to the other, was captured. All our generals behaved with faultless gallantry. General Roberts (Benjamin S.), chief of cavalry, was in the front and distinguished himself for his cool valor. The conduct of General Bayard won emphatic praise. Of the corps as a whole and its commander, General

Pope testified: "The behavior of General Banks' corps during the action was very fine. No greater gallantry and daring could be exhibited by any troops. I cannot speak too highly of the ceaseless intrepidity of General Banks himself during the whole of the engagement. He was in the front, exposed as much as any man in the command."

A view of the valley after the battle, as I leisurely passed over it looking after our dead, left its vivid, ghastly, inerasable picture in my mind: a field one full mile in length, and nearly that in width—all the centre and northern part of the valley particularly — a horrible desolation; torn, trodden, cannon-plowed, bloody; fences and corn-fields entirely obliterated; trees peeled and splintered; dead men; dead horses; broken gun-carriages; demolished wagons; wrecked ambulances; remnants of arms and equipments; burial parties still engaged in their sad work; the smell of the valley in places insupportable, compelling me to resort to the knolls till the nerves of my stomach were calmed. So hasty had been the retreat of the rebels that they left some of their dead unburied, though we granted them a

flag of truce for burial purposes. The gallant dead of our command who fell on the front were buried with the brave men of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Though the best possible under the circumstances was done, some of the trench graves contained sixty bodies each. In the woods at the west end of the valley, the rebels buried some of their dead in huge pit graves. Into one of these that I did not recognize, the ground everywhere being so torn, my horse sank to his body among the dead, over whom was but a thin coat of soil. On the western part of the field, a little east of the Orange road, sixty of the dead of the gallant Seventh Ohio infantry regiment were laid in one trench. A view of that grave can never fade from my memory. Dead horses lay everywhere. I counted thirteen splendid artillery beasts in one spot, cut down by one of the batteries of General Ricketts' division.

On visiting the Crittenden mansion I found it severely cut and splintered by bullets, canister and shell. Mrs. Crittenden was alive, as I had prophesied, but had not recovered from her fright and the awful noise and strokes of the battle. I endeavored

to prove to her that life was something to be thankful for, using the text, "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" But she insisted that she was already half dead. In fact, she looked so. Her mansion was riddled. Her premises were a ghastly spectacle. The floors were covered with blood where the confederate surgeons had operated on the wounded and dying, using her house as a field hospital. Near the front door, in what had been a front yard, a rebel lieutenant had just been buried. The battle-wave had rolled northerly over the house, and in the night had recoiled and surged back, thus giving the mansion a double portion of lead, iron and blood. The grounds around needed no plowing. Mrs. Crittenden during the battle, too chivalrous to huddle with her negresses in the cellar, crouched alone, as she told me, in a corner of her south parlor. While thus posed in awful suspense and anxiety, a rebel shell tore through the front of the house, and, striking a heavy timber on the north wall of the parlor, fell back at her feet without exploding. There lay the shell. Neither mistress nor servants dared touch it, thinking there

was still death in the black monster. What became of the superintendent, Mr. Newman, I did not learn. At any rate, we had relieved him of the necessity of gathering the crops of the plantation for the year 1862. They were harvested in a day.

After the battle, our commander issued a special order, from which we make extracts :

"*Officers and Men of the First Rhode Island Cavalry :*

"You have met the enemy bravely. You received the first shock of the battle of Cedar Mountain. Although no opportunity was afforded you for charging upon the enemy's lines, you as calmly and fearlessly awaited the order to charge, amidst that terrible tempest of shot and shell, as though upon an evening parade, until six o'clock, after having been three hours under fire, when you were ordered from the field to other duty. For this I thank you. Your country thanks you in the name of God and liberty."

"Soldiers, we have yet other work before us. Be ready. Strike hard and spare not." "A. M. DUFFIE."

The roll of our regiment suffered :—

DEAD : Lieutenant James P. Taylor, Troop C ; Private John Mulvey, Troop D : Private Frank Travers, Troop E ; Private William Henry Woodward, Troop L.

WOUNDED : Private Robert Durdeen, Troop F ; Benjamin Potter, Troop H ; Privates Asa A. Hall, L. Martin and Martin L. Parmenter, Troop K ; William H. Caswell, Troop L.

CAPTURED : Two of our wounded men—Robert Durdeen, Troop F ; and Benjamin Potter, Troop H.

As pilgrims, in thought, we revisit the plain,
War-trampled and wet with the blood of the slain.